

Human Services Funding Committee / Community Development Committee (CDC)
Minutes

January 22, 2008

Attending: *Members:* Claude Tellier, , Mary Jane Laus, Paulette Brooks, Isaac BenEzra, and Jana McClure. *Town Staff:* Town Manager, Laurence Shaffer, and Roy Rosenblatt
Select Board Member: Anne Awad

The meeting of the Community Development Committee met in the first floor meeting room of the Town Hall beginning at 7:05 p.m.

Town Manager, Larry Shaffer discussed the 2009 budget and absence of Human Service funding in 2009. He discussed **how** the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funding from this year helped supplement Mr. Rosenblatt's and his assistant's salary, freeing up a portion (90%) of general fund monies. This surplus he designated for a feasibility study to evaluate the possibility of building a new facility for the Amherst Survival Center. This study could create the foundation for future CDBG funding grants.

Mr. Shaffer proposed that the future funding for human services be targeted through the CDBG funds, after a one year hiatus as required by the state. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a one year supplanting rule that CDBG funds will not be used in place of previous town expenditures. During this time, Amherst College could be petitioned for "bridge funding" for the local human services need. CDBG funds would be limited to 5 programs and the criteria set by the state that mandates funds be used for low to moderate income level residents.

Mr. Shaffer discussed the town's history with CDBG grant applications. If the Town of Amherst does not remain in the State's "Mini-entitlement" status, it could apply for funding under the "Small Cities" program allocating funds ranging from \$66,000 to \$160,000. for human services. Mr. Shaffer encouraged the committee to focus on a needs assessment and establish new priorities with any funding available. He encouraged targeting a limited need, and creating a definable impact with the funding.

Select Board member, Ms. Awad discussed the Select Board's priority for human service funding (4 to 1 vote). If human service funding is taken out of the Town's budget, it will never be placed back into the budget in the future. The committee must evaluate whether it recommends to maintain a general fund program each year, or bridge over to fund human services with CDBG grant funding from the state.

Mr. BenEzra proposed "To request that the Town, through the Select Board, commit \$70,000. to be allocated for human service needs" After a lengthy discussion the motion was passed unanimously. The committee tabled the discussion of CDBG human service funding for a later date.

Ms. Laus informed the committee, that Big Brother/Big Sister director, Renee Moss requested the committee include the Agencies input in its evaluation of priorities. The committee agreed to invite any interested agency to its next meeting to enter into conversation about the funding.

The committee then discussed the CDBG Public Hearing scheduled for Monday, January 28, 2008 at 6:45 p.m during the Select Board Meeting.

Mr. BenEzra then discussed the possibility of affordable housing above stores within the new zoning areas of “the village concept” The committee encouraged communication with the Housing Partnership and builder to pursue the idea.

Next meeting of the Community Development Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, January 30, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. at a location to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paulette Brooks